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ABSTRACT

This paper gives an overview of 10 directions language teachers might take in the future. After providing background on the history of language teaching, language teaching methodology is defined and a distinction is made between methodologies and approaches. Next, the 10 scenarios are briefly described. They include the following: teacher/learner collaborates; method synergistics; curriculum developmentalism; content-basics; multintelligencia; total functional response; strategopedia; lexical phraseology; o-zone whole language; and full-frontal communicativity. (VWL)

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Language Teaching Methodology

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Background

Language teaching came into its own as a profession in the last century. Central to this phenomenon was the emergence of the concept of "methods" of language teaching. The method concept in language teaching—the notion of a systematic set of teaching practices based on a particular theory of language and language learning—is a powerful one, and the quest for better methods was a preoccupation of teachers and applied linguists throughout the 20th century. Howatt's (1984) overview documents the history of changes of practice in language teaching throughout history, bringing the chronology up through the Direct Method in the 20th century. One of the most lasting legacies of the Direct Method has been the notion of "method" itself.

Language Teaching Methodology Defined

Methodology in language teaching has been characterized in a variety of ways. A more or less classical formulation suggests that methodology is that which links theory and practice. Theory statements would include theories of what language is and how language is learned or, more specifically, theories of second language acquisition (SLA). Such theories are linked to various design features of language instruction. These design features might include stated objectives, syllabus specifications, types of activities, roles of teachers, learners, materials, and so forth. Design features in turn are linked to actual teaching and learning practices as observed in the environments where language teaching and learning take place. This whole complex of elements defines language teaching methodology.

Figure 1. Language Teaching Methodology

Schools of Language Teaching Methodology

Within methodology a distinction is often made between methods and approaches, in which methods are held to be fixed teaching systems with prescribed techniques and practices, whereas approaches represent language teaching philosophies that can be interpreted and applied in a variety of different ways in the classroom. This distinction is probably most usefully seen as defining a continuum of entities ranging from highly prescribed methods to loosely described approaches.

The period from the 1950s to the 1980s has often been referred to as "The Age of Methods," during which a number of quite detailed prescriptions for language teaching were proposed. Situational Language Teaching evolved in the United Kingdom while a parallel method, Audio-Lingualism, emerged in the United States. In the middle-methods period, a variety of methods were proclaimed as successors to the then prevailing Situational Language Teaching and Audio-Lingual methods. These alternatives were promoted under such titles as Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, and Total Physical Response. In the 1980s, these methods in turn came to be overshadowed by more interactive views of language teaching, which collectively came to be known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Communicative Language Teaching advocates subscribed to a broad set of principles such as these:

- Learners learn a language through using it to communicate.
- Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities.
- Fluency is an important dimension of communication.
- Communication involves the integration of different language skills.
- Learning is a process of creative construction and involves trial and error.

However, CLT advocates avoided prescribing the set of practices through which these principles could

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Methods and Teacher and Learner Roles		
Method	**Teacher Roles**	**Learner Roles**
Situational Language Teaching	Context Setter Error Corrector	Imitator Memorizer
Audio-lingualism	Language Modeler Drill Leader	Pattern Practicer Accuracy Enthusiast
Communicative Language Teaching	Needs Analyst Task Designer	Improvisor Negotiator
Total Physical Response	Commander Action Monitor	Order Taker Performer
The Silent Way	Pantomimist Neutral Observer	Inventor Problem Solver
Community Language Learning	Counselor Paraphraser	Collaborator Whole Person
The Natural Approach	Actor Props User	Guesser Immerser
Suggestopedia	Auto-hypnotist Authority Figure	Relaxer True Believer

Figure 2. Methods and Teacher and Learner Roles

best be realized, thus putting CLT clearly on the approach rather than the method end of the spectrum.

Communicative Language Teaching has spawned a number of off-shoots that share the same basic set of principles, but which spell out philosophical details or envision instructional practices in somewhat diverse ways. These CLT spin-off approaches include The Natural Approach, Cooperative Language Learning, Content-Based Teaching, and Task-Based Teaching.

It is difficult to describe these various methods briefly and yet fairly, and such a task is well beyond the scope of this paper. However, several up-to-date texts are available that do detail differences and similarities among the many different approaches and methods that have been proposed. (See, e.g., Larsen-Freeman, 2000, and Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Perhaps it is possible to get a sense of the range of method proposals by looking at a synoptic view of the roles defined for teachers and learners within various methods. Such a synoptic (perhaps scanty) view can be seen in the chart above (Figure 2).

As suggested in the chart, some schools of methodology see the teacher as ideal language model and commander of classroom activity (e.g., Audio-Lingual Method, Natural Approach, Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response) whereas others see the teacher as background facilitator and classroom colleague to the learners (e.g., Communicative Language Teaching, Cooperative Language Learning).

There are other global issues to which spokespersons for the various methods and approaches respond in alternative ways. For example, should second language learning by adults be modeled on first language learning by children? One set of schools (e.g., Total Physical Response, Natural Approach) notes that first language acquisition is the only universally successful model of language learning we have, and thus that second language pedagogy must necessarily model itself on first language acquisition. An opposed view (e.g., Silent Way, Suggestopedia) observes that adults have different brains, interests, timing constraints, and learning environments than do children, and that adult classroom learning therefore has to be fashioned in a way quite dissimilar to the way in which nature fashions how first languages are learned by children.

Another key distinction turns on the role of perception versus production in early stages of language learning. One school of thought proposes that learners should begin to communicate, to use a new language actively, on first contact (e.g., Audio-Lingual Method, Silent Way, Community Language Learning), while the other school of thought states that an initial and prolonged period of reception (listening, reading) should precede any attempts at production (e.g., Natural Approach).

What's Now, What's Next?

The future is always uncertain, and this is no less true in anticipating methodological directions in second language teaching than in any other field. Some current predictions assume the carrying on and refinement of current trends; others appear a bit more science-fiction-like in their vision. Outlined below are

10 scenarios that are likely to shape the teaching of second languages in the next decades of the new millennium. These methodological candidates are given identifying labels in a somewhat tongue-in-cheek style, perhaps a bit reminiscent of yesteryear's method labels.

1. **Teacher/Learner Collaborates**. Matchmaking techniques will be developed which will link learners and teachers with similar styles and approaches to language learning. Looking at the Teacher and Learner roles sketched in Figure 2, one can anticipate development of a system in which the preferential ways in which teachers teach and learners learn can be matched in instructional settings, perhaps via online computer networks or other technological resources.

2. **Method Synergistics**. Crossbreeding elements from various methods into a common program of instruction seems an appropriate way to find those practices which best support effective learning. Methods and approaches have usually been proposed as idiosyncratic and unique, yet it appears reasonable to combine practices from different approaches where the philosophical foundations are similar. One might call such an approach "Disciplined Eclecticism."

3. **Curriculum Developmentalism**. Language teaching has not profited much from more general views of educational design. The curriculum perspective comes from general education and views successful instruction as an interweaving of Knowledge, Instructional, Learner, and Administrative considerations. From this perspective, methodology is viewed as only one of several instructional considerations that are necessarily thought out and realized in conjunction with all other curricular considerations.

4. **Content-Basics**. Content-based instruction assumes that language learning is a by-product of focus on meaning—on acquiring some specific topical content—and that content topics to support language learning should be chosen to best match learner needs and interests and to promote optimal development of second language competence. A critical question for language educators is "what content" and "how much content" best supports language learning. The natural content for language educators is literature and language itself, and we are beginning to see a resurgence of interest in literature and in the topic of "language: the basic human technology" as sources of content in language teaching.

5 **Multintelligencia**. The notion here is adapted from the Multiple Intelligences view of human talents proposed by Howard Gardner (1983). This model is one of a variety of learning style models that have been proposed in general education with follow-up inquiry by language educators. The chart below shows Gardner's proposed eight native intelligences and indicates classroom language-rich task types that play to each of these particular intelligences.

Intelligence Type	Appropriate Educational Activities
Linguistic	lectures, worksheets, word games, journals, debates
Logical	mathematical puzzles, estimations, problem solving
Spatial	charts, diagrams, graphic organizers, drawings, films
Bodily	hands-on, mime, craft, demonstrations
Musical	singing, poetry, Jazz Chants, mood music
Interpersonal	group work, peer tutoring, class projects
Intrapersonal	reflection, interest centers, personal values tasks
Naturalist	field trips, show and tell, plant and animal projects

Figure 3. (Adapted From Christison, 1998)

The challenge here is to identify these intelligences in individual learners and then to determine appropriate and realistic instructional tasks in response.

6. **Total Functional Response**. Communicative Language Teaching was founded (and floundered) on earlier notional/functional proposals for the description of languages. Now new leads in discourse and genre analysis, schema theory, pragmatics, and systemic/functional grammar are rekindling an interest in functionally based approaches to language teaching. One pedagogical proposal has led to a widespread reconsideration of the first and second language program in Australian schools, where instruction turns on five basic text genres identified as Report, Procedure, Explanation, Exposition, and Recount. Refinement of functional models will lead to increased attention to genre and text types in both first and second language instruction.

7. **Strategopedia**. "Learning to Learn" is the key theme in an instructional focus on language learning strategies. Such strategies include, at the most basic level, memory tricks, and at higher levels, cognitive and metacognitive strategies for learning, thinking, planning, and self-monitoring. Research findings suggest that strategies can indeed be taught to language learners, that learners will apply these strategies in language learning tasks, and that such application does produce significant gains in language learning. Simple and yet highly effective strategies, such as those that help learners remember and access new second language vocabulary items, will attract considerable instructional interest in Strategopedia.

8. **Lexical Phraseology**. The lexical phraseology view holds that only "a minority of spoken clauses are entirely novel creations" and that "memorized clauses and clause-sequences form a high proportion of the fluent stretches of speech heard in every day conversation." One estimate is that "the number of memorized complete clauses and sentences known to the mature English speaker probably amounts, at least, to several hundreds of thousands" (Pawley & Syder, 1983). Understanding of the use of lexical phrases has been immensely aided by large-scale computer studies of language corpora, which have provided hard data to support the speculative inquiries into lexical phraseology of second language acquisition researchers. For language teachers, the results of such inquiries have led to conclusions that language teaching should center on these memorized lexical patterns and the ways they can be pieced together, along with the ways they vary and the situations in which they occur.

9. **O-zone Whole Language**. Renewed interest in some type of "Focus on Form" has provided a major impetus for recent second language acquisition (SLA) research. "Focus on Form" proposals, variously labeled as consciousness-raising, noticing, attending, and enhancing input, are founded on the assumption that students will learn only what they are aware of. Whole Language proponents have claimed that one way to increase learner awareness of how language works is through a course of study that incorporates broader engagement with language, including literary study, process writing, authentic content, and learner collaboration.

10. **Full-Frontal Communicativity**. We know that the linguistic part of human communication represents only a small fraction of total meaning. At least one applied linguist has gone so far as to claim that, "We communicate so much information non-verbally in conversations that often the verbal aspect of the conversation is negligible." Despite these cautions, language teaching has chosen to restrict its attention to the linguistic component of human communication, even when the approach is labeled Communicative. The methodological proposal is to provide instructional focus on the non-linguistic aspects of communication, including rhythm, speed, pitch, intonation, tone, and hesitation phenomena in speech and gesture, facial expression, posture, and distance in non-verbal messaging.

Conclusion

This paper provides an overview of 10 potential paths that language teachers might find themselves traveling in the opening years of the new millennium. I know that teachers will be blazing many new trails of their own, and I encourage them all to share their experiences with their colleagues.

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